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(3) *The Wedding Ceremony. The Sadi.* The actual wedding is divided into three parts, each occurring on a different day and the whole lasting three days. There is first the arrival of the *barat*—the party which brings the bridegroom and which reaches the girl's village on the evening of the first day. The next part occurs on the following night and is the wedding proper, the *sadi*; and finally the bridegroom departs for his own home on the third day and this is called the *bida* or farewell. 585

(*a*) *Barat.* A day or two after the parching of the *lawa* there are preparations at the bridegroom's house for the departure from thence for the house of the bride. The *barat* is usually so planned that it arrives at the girl's village just after dusk. The *barat* is made up entirely of men, and women are not permitted to accompany the procession. Before the *barat* can leave there is a feast given to its members by the women of the family. Following this the bridegroom is put into a *palki* or litter. The party also takes with it various things needed for the *sadi* including the *lawa*, a *barain* (small whitish-coloured earthenware pot decorated with yellow figures and in which are carried a *seer* of rice and, if in season, two mangoes), seven *dips* (earthenware lamps), and a *dahingar* (a decorated earthen pot like the *barain* in which *dahi*—curds—are kept). These things are carried by the party in baskets on their heads, but in the *palki* will be put the *sendur*, *kankan* (black and red beads strung on a thin iron wire), some toys and *gobar* (cowdung). Some one to beat the drum should accompany the party which leaves the boy's village amid music and singing. The women who remain behind are busy preparing for the return of the bridegroom and his party three days later. [562] [574] [493] [482] 585

The procession should not arrive in the village until night has fallen. Upon its arrival it does not at once enter the village, but stops some distance away and with drums and singing announces its presence. The girl's party which has been waiting the arrival of the *barat* is now summoned by her father. The women of the bride's party accompany the men in greeting the *barat* and the group proceeds to the edge of the village with lights, the person carrying the leading light being either the girl's sister or a female cousin. This light is carried on top of an earthen jar resting on the head in a manner similar to the way the light is carried at the *mangarmati* time. The men of the party bring a *chhattari*, or an umbrella made of bamboo branches and leaves from the *palasa* tree. Like the crown in Europe, the umbrella in village India is essentially a symbol of sovereignty. A *mashal*, or torch on the end of a pole is also brought and waved about in imitation of a battle. The men of the two parties now meet and greet one [354] [482] [293] [354]

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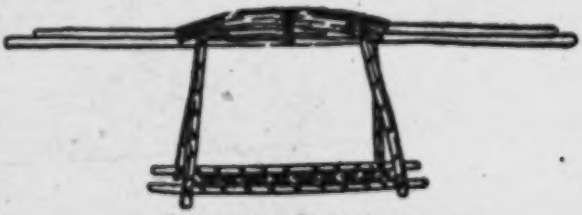
another. In more Hindulzed communities they may set off fireworks at this time if they can afford them. The arrangement for these is made by a Basor. In the midst of this din the girl's father speaks to the boy's father and tells him that they are glad that they have come, that they will expect them to tarry for some days in their village, and that everything possible will be done for their comfort. As the best wedding months are usually dry and pleasant, the boy's party may be accommodated under a large tree. Wherever they are put, the place is called the *janmasa*. If there is an available house so much the better.



THE WEDDING PALKI - BAISTEDDI

Fig. 22

On entering the village the two parties repair to the bride's house, led by the woman with the lamp on her head. Upon reaching the house the rice is taken out of the *barain*, pipes are passed around for a smoke, and even drinks may be offered. During this time the bridegroom has remained seated in his *palki* which is now brought close to the marriage booth. He reaches out and shakes the booth, to test, as it were, its strength and workmanship. The girl's mother comes to the *palki* and with the thumb and little finger of her right hand dabs a bit of vermilion on the forehead of her future son-in-law and then pours out the water which was in the *kalsa* with the light that brought them into the village. Members of each group should bring *gular* or *semal* twigs, as the case may be, which have been plastered with *gobar* and which have some *tikas* (dabs) of *sendur* on them. These are laid in the centre of the booth next to the *magrohan*. The *ghara* of *lawa* is taken by a member of the boy's group, who walks round the *palki* seven times with it. After the seventh round the boy's *maur* or wedding crown (made up usually, of peacock feathers, bamboo and palm leaves) is removed and the party retires to the place prepared for them, the *janmasa*.

Arriving at the *janmasa* they settle themselves and are again supplied with smokes by members of the bride's household. Pre-

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on a bed, if he is on one, as on the ground, but it is mostly affirmed that the ground is the place for the dying person. The body should be put there only when it is certain that the person is about to expire. The place where the body is laid should be first plastered with cow dung if that is possible. The head should be toward the north, that is, pointing towards the sacred Ganges, and the feet to the south, for it is in that direction that the soul has to go to the land of death. Most of the graveyards are to the south of Kol villages.

As soon as it is ascertained that the person is dead the fact of death is publicly proclaimed by loud lamentations set up by members of the family. The lamentations do not seem to be linked up with the frightening away of evil spirits but are essentially a natural expression of grief; although to an outsider they may seem to be overdone. The body should not remain within the house, but should be immediately removed to a place made ready for it on the veranda or the small courtyard in front of the house. There the body is laid upon the ground and is covered with a new white cloth. Nothing is done to the body in the way of measuring its length or the tying of its toes.[1]

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUNERAL. Immediate preparations are now begun for the funeral, which, under favourable circumstances should be underway within an hour or two. Friends prepare a bamboo sling (*tatari*), made of two long bamboo poles with a few crossbars. On this the body is placed and fastened. A wooden *charpai* (rope cot) may serve just as well, and if the death occurred on one, this is used. Such a *charpai* has to be discarded anyhow, and in this case it is abandoned at the place of disposal. It is, however, immediately taken possession of by a low caste Hindu—a Basor or a Domar.

Occasionally the body is washed with a bit of cold water at the house before being transported to the place of burial or cremation. The most common procedure, though, is that the body is not washed till the funeral grounds are reached.

If the person has died in the evening, too late for immediate disposal, the body may be kept upon the earth outside the house during the whole of the night. Friends and relatives sit round the body which is regarded with awe and sometimes fear. A lamp is kept burning so that no evil spirit may get possession of the corpse and enter it in the darkness. Nevertheless no efforts are made to tie the corpse

[1] As soon as the body is laid out, some non-Kol groups measure its length and tie its big toes together in order to determine whether or not a live spirit has gained entrance to the body during the period between death and its removal to the cemetery. If a spirit has entered, the body will elongate and the thread about the toes will be broken.

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764 nor measure it to see whether a spirit has gotten within and caused the body to swell. Other groups, such as the Chamars,[1] are said to do this. In Rewa it was reported that they should not wait till daylight, but should make immediate arrangements even though the work has [184] to be done at night. They said that if a man died about 9 p.m., they would have the corpse buried by 3 a.m. This, though, seems to be the exception and not the rule; other groups have denied this, saying that no burial ever occurs at night.

TRANSPORTATION OF THE CORPSE. The body is transported to [443] the burial or cremation grounds on the *tatari* as noted above. The corpse is always carried by men. Among the Oraons it is said that the custom once was that the women always carried the corpse.[2] Four men at a time act as pall bearers. The men are frequently changed so that as many as possible may assist. Even a man's [578] "enemies" should come and help and if such a person does there will be no further enmity between him and the rest of the family. This will also appease the spirit of the deceased. The body is usually carried so that the feet go first. There is a division of opinion on this matter though, as some Kols claim that the head should always be kept in the [823] direction of the Ganges; hence in cases where the graveyard happens to be in the north of the village the head is carried forward. That the feet go first is generally true in other groups, in order, it is said, [775] that the spirit of the deceased may not find its way back. But the Kol has no objection to the spirit's return, and in fact expects it back; actually food is put out near the house for it. If the body is set down for a time the head should point north and the feet south.

On the way to the *masan* or *marghat* (burial place) or the *ghat* or *chita* (burning place) there should be no chanting nor singing nor music of any kind. Lamentation and weeping is all that is in order. The party goes in two groups, first the men with the bier, and, following a short distance behind, the women and the children. The women bring the water for washing the body as well as the oil and turmeric for anointing. As the party proceeds it is customary to drop some mustard seeds along the way, and *laddu* balls made with sweetened *lai* (puffed [787] rice) are also dropped at intervals. On the way back they try to see [775] if these have been picked up, and form an opinion as to whether the [776] omens are good or bad. Some say that if the spirit of the deceased returns he will pick them up. The *rai* seeds will keep the evil spirits

1 Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, pp. 100—101.
2 Roy, S. C., *Oraon Religion and Customs*, p. 178.

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evea death are often traced to this influence. A woman is more likely 754
to have an evil eye than a man. Kols believe that Gond women
should be avoided as far as possible for many of them are said to have [648]
an evil eye that is likely to affect children. A well-dressed person is
more likely to be affected than a poorly dressed one, and to put on fine [292]
clothes is to attract attention and therefore invite danger.

The evil eye may also be directed against animals and plants; 754
so a bad crop, or the illness or death of an animal, may be due to some 789
one with an evil eye. Pumpkins are often trained to grow upon the 824
roof of Kol houses and may be protected from the evil eye by white-
washing an ordinary flat tile, making a cross in the centre with lamp- [241]
black, and putting upon the tile as many dots as there are pumpkins
growing upon the roof. This will protect them and no pumpkin will
rot. A rotted pumpkin is the sure sign of the activity of this mysterious
force.

The time of eating is a particularly dangerous one from the point 754
of view of the evil eye. No stranger should come into the presence 264
of one who is taking his meal, and at that time he should turn his
back on all people, including even the members of his own household. [609]
If one possessed of the evil eye should see the face of a person taking
his food it may have a serious result. Therefore it is wise never to
interrupt a man at his meals; this a stranger will never do. If
accidentally confronted in this way, the eater should stop his meal and
wait till the person has passed out of sight. To be seen in the act of [291]
putting on new clothes is also to expose oneself to the dangers of the
evil eye, should such a person happen by.

WHAT THESE FORCES DO. We have seen something of the 776
supernormal powers which the average Kol feels are all about him. 754
What do these powers bring to pass? Some indication of this has
been given already, but more may be stated. Diseases, particularly
wasting diseases, are surely due to the presence of evil spirits or the
spell of the evil eye. Any mysterious disease may be ascribed to [777]
these powers. Ill luck is also due to the attention of the forces named
above. A man may be tripped up: it is the work of a spirit; he
cuts his hand: a *bhut* directed the axe. We were told of a certain
evil spirit dwelling in a banyan tree on the Great Deccan Road near 776
Katni. He was particularly annoyed by cyclists: probably he could 754
not get used to the march of civilization. This spirit was especially 493
active at midday and midnight, and if a cyclist should fail to show
respect, by not dismounting and walking by the tree at those parti-
cular hours, he was sure to be killed. It was commonly reported

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that several men had already lost their lives, and others had been injured because they failed to show deference. At any time of the day one who passes this place should get off his cycle, stop, ask permission of the spirit to pass by, then walk with his cycle and mount it again a few paces beyond.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES. Various kinds of devices are used by Kols to ward off the power and effectiveness of the evil eye and the spirit world. The protective remedies commonly employed are listed alphabetically.

Abuse. The abusive language and songs generally used at the time of the wedding have a prophylactic value. There is somehow resident in *gali* a power which protects the bride and groom from evil influences.

Ashes are commonly employed both on religious and social occasions. Immediately after birth the new-born babe is dusted with ashes. They are also scattered over the place of birth, lest the spirits get a portion of the afterbirth and use it against the child and the family. A magic circle of ashes is put around the bed of the mother and her new-born child. When the *nara*, the stump of the umbilical cord, falls off, it is buried in the floor of the house, and a fire which is kept burning over the spot constantly supplies fresh ashes.

Ashes are kept in shrines to frighten evil spirits away. A portion thrown into the air from time to time will be effective in doing this. A fleck of ashes in a child's mouth after feeding with milk keep *bhuts*, who are passionately fond of milk, at a safe distance from the child. The ashes from burnt cow dung cakes are especially useful as are the ashes of wood from the *bel* tree.

Bangles are a protection. The glass types are mostly decorative, but their colours are efficacious as certain colours repel demons. Kols believe that metal bangles are the most effective, particularly the copper and iron types. As *bhuts* may enter through the feet or hands, bangles on the wrists and ankles prevent that way of entry.

Beads about the neck of children are particularly defensive against the evil eye. They should be of bright colours and the Kols most often use a type made from lac. Blue beads about the necks of cattle help to protect them from the evil eye and all valuable animals should be so guarded. A unique charm noted in this connection, though not among the Kols, was that of old bicycle chains fastened about the necks of cattle.

Charcoal, because it is a form of ash and black in colour, is a devil-scarer. Mixed with milk and wine and spread in a circle, it

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Rs. 4-8-0 per 1,000 tiles molded and put on the rack to harden. They told us that the average Kol worker would mold about 1,000 tiles per week.

In Panagar there are about 100 families of Kols. Some of them keep chickens and sell the few eggs they get in the local bazaar, or even take them to Jubbulpore on market days. Three or four own bullock carts. The rest of the community divide their time between working on the roads and doing coolie work in the fields when such work is available. This brings them from two to three annas per day. This work is far from steady, being largely seasonal.

In Benda village there are fifteen houses of Kols. Their main work is breaking stone for the metalled roads and preparing limestone for the kilns. They believe that by steady work they can make up to Rs. three per week, but the work is very hard and the hours are long. A few collect *tendu* leaves in season and when other work is slack they go out to the jungles and cut wood. They can earn from three to three and a half annas per day in that way. None of the Benda Kols does any farming.

At Salavara village on the Gaur River, we found that all were engaged in breaking stones for road metal. Their report seemed to indicate that they had to work harder for what they got than some other groups. They said it took them fifteen days to break a *saikara*—a stone measuring approximately 1,000 cubic feet—that two men were required and that they received Rs. 2-8-0 for the *saikara*. Five years ago, they said, they got Rs. 4/- for the same measure. They claim that the work is also harder now as they have to go further for suitable rock.

At Garha close to Jubbulpore, there is a fair-sized Kol community. The village is quite distinct from any other place and about 100 Kol families dwell there. Their occupations are various, and but few have steady work. This group consists mostly of coolies who get work wherever it is available or where the best wages are offered. Sawing wood is a common opening as they do not live far from the timber yards where all the sawing of planks is done by hand. During the wheat harvest they are nearly all away in the fields, leaving their houses empty for the few weeks of the harvesting season.

On a preliminary visit to Rewa State we went to a small Kol community not far from Rewa City. These Kols have considerable land for which they pay rental to a Mahratta landlord. What this group told us has been confirmed by many others, both in and out of Rewa State and seems to characterize the conditions of the Kols there. One informant told us that he was married about twelve years pre-